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LION-HEARTED FLUSSER

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LION-HEARTED FLUSSER.

A NAVAL HERO OF THE CIVIL WAR.

By CHARLES W. STEWART.

“Flusser is the name to conjure with,” wrote Assistant Secretary Fox to Major-General Butler in 1864.

Charles Williamson Flusser was one of the most gallant spirits in the War of the Rebellion. For three years, from 1861 to 1864, as a lieutenant and lieutenant-commander in the United States Navy, he rendered conspicuously gallant service in positions of responsibility and extreme peril, ranging from cutting-out expeditions to his mortal combat in wooden gunboats against the Confederate ironclad Albemarle at Plymouth, N. C. He fell on the deck of his own vessel, gun-lanyard in hand, instantly killed by the 9-inch shell that he had fired against the enemy's sloping iron roof not ten feet from the muzzle of his gun. He is not great by reason of his tragic death, but he is conspicuously remarkable for the zeal, efficiency, and cheerfulness with which he served, under peculiarly trying circumstances, the navy and the nation; and for the glorious example of honor, virtue, and patriotism that he furnished in his own person.

It has been said that a man's training should begin at least two hundred years before he is born. It is of record that three generations of Flusser's ancestors gave him a heritage of valor and

virtue. The Flussers of Germany, Austria, and Bohemia were sailors, soldiers, and merchants. William Flusser, in youth a sailor, in middle life a merchant prince of Prague, Bohemia, wedded in London, in 1797, beautiful Pauline Mayfield, daughter and sister of the Mayfields, money-lenders to the King. At Prague, in 1798, the first-born was named Charles Thomas for his mother's English brothers, Charles and Thomas Mayfield. The child thrived, and although there were brothers and sisters, he was given every special advantage that money, travel, and tutors could furnish, and was the worthy heir-apparent and intended successor to the father's great estate. He was tall, graceful, a scholar, a linguist, a musician, and a man at seventeen. He labored all of one stormy night on the battlefield at Prague, caring for the wounded, and returned home at dawn, wet to the skin. The stern father, in a rage at the self-exposure of his son and heir inflicted upon him a cruel beating that was never forgiven. In the night after his dear mother's funeral, Charles Thomas left the Flusser home, made his way to Genoa, and as an emigrant sailed for the country that was the hope and haven of all the world's oppressed. Landing at Baltimore, in 1816, his personal beauty and bearing were so winning that he was at once taken by a Mr. Furlong, of Charles County, Maryland, to his country home as family tutor. He was tall and ruddy, with blue eyes and curly brown hair, loved and admired by all who knew him. It is said that money and letters from Bohemia were returned marked "Not wanted."

Charles Thomas Flusser came from Charles County to Annapolis in 1821, seeking a larger field for his talents, and opened a successful select school for young women, teaching belles-lettres, music, dancing, and deportment. Some of the proudest ladies of Maryland gained in gracefulness, if not in grace, in "Flusser's gentle-school." The discipline was not cruel. At one time observing through a window two of his pupils jumping over desks, he entered the class-room, assembled the school, and holding an offending lady on each of his knees gave them a lecture on deportment. His favorite pupil came to class the day before an assembly ball with her hair done up in curl-papers, and this gentle teacher laid hands upon her and extracted every paper while the culprit and scholars shook with laughter. The lady of the curl-papers, Miss Juliana Waters, became Mrs. Flusser in

1827. Apparently, this marriage caused the closing of the select school, in which the rewards of merit were the approving words and smiles of the handsome principal. Flusser, about the time of his marriage, was admitted to the bar and appointed Professor of Languages at the University of Maryland, where he filled the professorial chair with dignity and credit for ten years.

Juliana Waters, mother of Charles W. Flusser, was a daughter of Jonathan Waters, of Annapolis. The family was of Revolutionary, navy, and army stock. Her great-grandfather, John Willson (d. 1751, of Willson's Deare Purchas, sometime a soldier), gave his daughter Catherine to Nathan Waters, afterwards a Continental soldier. Nathan's son, Jonathan Waters, of Annapolis, also a Continental, survived confinement in Charleston prison-ships and married the accomplished and beautiful widow, Henriette Mayo, née Thornton, once adherent to the crown. This charming lady was a kinswoman of the Thornton, Jenkins, and Parker families of our navy. By her first marriage she is an ancestor of the navy Mayos. Her son, Isaac Mayo, rendered gallant service and died a commodore in 1861. Another son, Nicholas Biddle Mayo, resigned from the navy to fight a duel, passed into Mexico, and fell a victim of treachery at Goliad. Jonathan Waters' brother William, Continental surgeon, dressed the wound of Lafayette at the Brandywine. William's son Kerwin Waters, of the Enterprise-Boxer fight, lies in Portland, Me., beneath the beautiful monument erected by the young men of that city. Two cousins of Juliana Waters fell at Bladensburg. Several of her kinswomen married naval officers. John Taylor Wood of the United States Navy, commander in the Confederate States Navy, and aid to Jefferson Davis, was one of these fortunate men.

A child of the blood of Waters and Flusser might well be expected to stand in the front rank of any assembly where fate or fortune should place him. The call of the blood is strong, and when it is aided by habits and examples of his people their teachings become principles, their examples ideals, to the man of healthful body and sound mind.

Juliana Waters was fit to be the mother of heroes. Charles Thomas Flusser was possessed of the gift of tongues, a mastery of logic and of the pen; a metaphysician, fit to be the father of scholars, diplomatists, and scientists.

Their second son, Charles Williamson Flusser, was born in Annapolis, Md., September 27, 1832, under the sign of Mars, in a howling gale that drowned his wailing cries, and perhaps cast his fate and decreed what seemed the accident of his death, which occurred under the same sign.

The Flussers moved to Vicksburg in the hard times of 1837, and shortly after located or settled in Louisville, Ky. The father became an honored member of the Kentucky bar and a friend of George D. Prentice, editor of the *Courier-Journal*. He suffered greatly in health. The mother managed a small hotel to help furnish food and clothing for eight vigorous romping children. The hotel was a good one. The best of the foreigners in Louisville boarded there. It was a place of music, song, and cheeriness, of entertaining, instructive, scholarly talk, a home of the sturdy Lutheran faith, of temperate, frugal habits, good morals and personal cleanliness. At night the mother sewed and mended for her children. They were conspicuous for neatness in dress. There were no sewing machines in those days. As the mother worked with shears and needle, after the younger children were put to bed, Charles, who was as the apple of her eye, would read to her till long after midnight. Here was laid the foundation of that knowledge and love of literature that later surprised his instructors and few intimates, for Flusser knew Shakspeare by heart. He knew the Bible and its history. For works in Spanish, French, and German he required no translator. He could whistle whole operas. His chief mental recreation was a new study.

A story is told, that while Flusser was with the Coast Survey, a gentleman brought a letter written in Syriac or Arabic to the superintendent, Bache, asking for a translation. The letter was turned over to Flusser. The translation was satisfactorily made, but the gentleman objected to Flusser's bill of fifty dollars for the work. Flusser remarked that in his opinion fifty dollars was a dirt-cheap price *as he had to learn the language*, and the gentleman paid the bill in great good humor.

In his fourteenth year, as a personal favor to Mrs. Flusser, Captain William H. Chambers, representative in Congress from the Louisville district, obtained from President Polk his appointment to the Naval Academy. From that time his life was in and of the navy. The members of his family have told interesting

stories of his boyhood. A sister said that he was not like other boys. At dancing-school he sought out the wall-flowers for partners. He rescued a drowning boy from the river and later punched the face of the rescued for telling of it. Four of his six nephews have saved drowning persons. Charles once sailed into a butcher boy who was beating a horse. The boy butcher promptly took a fall out of the future naval hero, laying his scalp open and leaving a permanent scar. This child was the leader of one boy-clan that fought another clan for the possession of a certain back fence. The reward of the victors was the right to sit astride the fence, yell like fiends, and pound the fence with wooden swords. He was a boy among boys, but a leader always. The sister considered his most prominent characteristics in boyhood to be love of duty and love of his mother. In manhood he was little changed in these respects. Love of duty was more pronounced and included love of flag and country. His love for his mother became a passion, and he compared all other women with her as a standard of perfection. He always respected womanhood and was a ready knight for every woman and child that needed his protection.

After his appointment as midshipman came, in the summer of 1847, he studied for the Naval Academy entrance examination sitting under the low-spreading branches of a large tree in the garden, six-year-old sister Fanny comfortably placed in the tree with her doll, and the baby brother, Guy, in the cradle rocked by his foot. He was thus to his last day at home always relieving his dear mother of care and worry. On leaving home, he kissed them good-bye and said, "Don't cry little Fan, I am going to earn lots of money for you and mother." When at sea, he always left a half-pay ticket for the mother.

At Annapolis he was a favorite, and all reports of service there and at sea were commendatory. While a midshipman his captain reported him fully competent to perform the duties of higher grades. His yearly standing continually improved. In June, 1853, it was number four, with 88 per cent of the combined maximum multiple, and mathematics 97 per cent; French 97 per cent; gunnery 86 per cent; seamanship and tactics 76 per cent. The last was his lowest mark. He stood easily first in some subjects, high in all, and without apparent effort. He has stated that he shamefully neglected his studies at the academy and read

for pleasure stories of the sea, wars, and battles. He wrote in his ordnance book when a midshipman, "In my opinion, to locate, attack, and destroy the enemy's armed forces in the shortest possible time is the most proper, wise, and merciful course in war."

The following extract from a letter written by a naval officer of flag rank describes the person of Flusser:

* * * On two occasions we were thrown together as instructors at the Naval Academy. We had rooms in the bachelor's quarters and became very intimate, and although there was a difference of only three or four years in our ages he often spoke to others of me as his younger brother. I had the greatest admiration for his character as an officer and a gentleman, and for his many varied attainments and showed this by deference to his opinion and advice. He was generous to a fault, although not a spendthrift, and I never knew him to be guilty of an ungentlemanly or mean act.

Unfortunately, he left no picture that would convey to strangers the kind of man that he was. He was about five feet seven and a half inches in height, slim in build, and of a graceful, erect figure. His face indicated the strength of his character and his eyes were large, bright, and expressive. When he smiled he slightly showed his white teeth through his small brown moustache, and his expression was most winning and kindly. When angry, he showed in his face a determination that convinced me of the truth of stories that I had heard of his courage and prowess in his younger days.

He was temperate in all things, not drinking even wine. He was quick in his movements and very active. I have seen him stand at the foot of my bed and spring on to the bed backward over the foot-board which came to the small of his back. Sometimes in going out of the grounds, he would tell me to take the gate, and then he would scale the high wall like a cat, and be waiting for me outside.

He would have made himself a famous mathematician if he had turned his attention in that direction. He was fond of good books and had many. He had a deep, well-modulated voice, and was an excellent reader. He would take up a prayer-book in my room and read portions of the beautiful service as I never heard it read, without affectation. He could quote Shakspeare accurately and with startling effect, and if he had so wished could

have made himself a great tragedian. He made a study of words and their correct pronunciation, and to aid him, he divided up a dictionary for convenience of handling.

Flusser was cool under all circumstances, and apparently without nerves; but he once told me that he was naturally of a nervous temperament and had made up his mind not to show he was under excitement no matter what occurred. His will-power was so great that he was able to the end to carry out this determination. On one occasion, in my room, we were overhauling our revolvers. After cleaning his, he was lowering the hammer, when his thumb slipped, the cartridge exploded and the bullet just grazed my head and was buried in the window-casing behind me. Flusser, although he must have been much shocked, merely arched his eyebrows, which was his wont, and said, "My dear boy, I nearly killed you," and then turned so that I could not see his face, laid the revolver on the table and was silent for some hours afterwards.

Flusser was sometimes given to harmless practical jokes. One night, in his white uniform he asked me to take a walk. I declined, saying I had some studying to do, when he replied, "That is right, my boy; keep ahead of the youngsters." He went out and returned in an hour or so, smiling. He said that he had gone to the cemetery to the tombs of relatives, and had sat down on one of the vaults, which, by the way, was the same one in which some years afterwards, I temporarily placed his remains sent from their first burial-place. After meditating upon what the future had in store for him, he arose and went to the gate to go out when a negro passed across the field a short distance from him, caught sight of him, gave an unearthly yell, and started for the shanties in Lockwoodville, with Flusser chasing him. As he came near the houses, the man disappeared. Flusser said that the darkey would repeat to his dying day that true ghost story. I have related this to show that Flusser was not that austere and serious man that strangers sometimes thought him. * * * *

Flusser graduated number six in the class of 1853. This was a fighting class, headed by John Taylor Wood of Kentucky and footed by John Irwin of Pennsylvania. Flusser fell at Plymouth; Cummings at Port Hudson; Gwin at Yazoo River; Newman, Belknap, Williams (lost in the Oneida), J. P. Foster, Harmony, Henry Wilson, Benham, McGunnegele and Irwin survived the

war with fine records in the Union Navy; Wood, Thorburn, and Eggleston fought for the South as bravely as their classmates fought for the Union.

Returning to Norfolk from South America and the Paraguayan Expedition in the brig *Dolphin*, commanded by Charles Steedman, in December, 1860, Flusser found his beloved country seething with secession. He had one quarrel with a brother officer who asserted the right to "cuss" the United States at any time or place. This nearly led to a duel with Flusser, and it was finally agreed that no one was to say anything whatever against the United States in Flusser's presence.

Flusser was a geographical Southerner of Maryland and Kentucky, where state pride was always a ruling passion. "My Maryland" and "Old Kentucky Home" are the best-loved state songs. Officers, as a rule, sided with their states, which included their families, relatives, and dearest friends. A Southerner rarely sided with the North; because that meant for him the contempt and hatred of his kinspeople. Regarding divided allegiance, there were on either side in the Civil War members of the naval families of Farragut, Porter, Dahlgren, Buchanan, Lee, Drayton, Parker, Wise, Dornin, Adams, Stribling, Henderson, Taylor, Mayo, Evans, and Flusser. Most of the younger officers went with their states. Kentucky, occupying middle ground, furnished Jouett, Flusser, McCann, Pendergrast, Terry, and Watson to the Union, and John Taylor Wood, Langhorne, Dunnington (of *Arkansas Post*), Shryock, and Benton to the Confederacy.

The Southerners who remained loyal to the Union were, at first, suspected of disloyalty. Even the immortal Farragut, according to his foster-brother, was not excepted from this general suspicion. Mrs. Farragut's brother, Benjamin P. Loyall, went South, but the admiral would say, with a twinkle of the eye, "Mrs. Farragut was Loyall."

When Flusser had laid up the *Dolphin* at Norfolk, where she was later destroyed when the navy-yard was abandoned in 1861, he obtained a few days leave, and included New York City in his route to home. Brother officers from slave states assumed that he would "go South." To this suggestion, made to him by an officer of high rank, a life-long friend, he replied in the following characteristically loyal letter sent to the New York Hotel (a famous rendezvous for Southerners), and published with comments in the *New York Commercial*:

NEW YORK, Thursday, Jan. 3, 1861.

Dear Cap:

I shall never do it. What! be one of the very first to fire on the flag? Not I!

I have no appetite for argument to-night: my heart is sick. Is it not enough to drive an honest man out of his senses to find thieves making a great nation destroy itself?

Where are your wits, man? How can this business end? In "peace" and "slavery"? The end may bring the death of both forever; and worse, inaugurate an era of blood unparalleled. Will the South be whipped by the North? Not while one Southerner lives. Will the North be whipped by the South? Not while the Alleghanies rise above level land. Just look at the prospect: blood: rapine: desolation! war!

Hollins!!

Thou canst not shake thy gory locks at me and say—I did it.

Yours, in Union,

C. W. FLUSSER.

Captain Du Pont asked for him and with the settled prospect of duty at Philadelphia, Flusser hurried to Louisville, to visit home and loved ones. Here everything was changed. It was openly proclaimed that the Union would soon be dismembered into three confederacies, Confederate States, New England States, and United States, the last to be the smallest and weakest of the new nations. The accomplished father had died in 1858. All the family, except a little sister, was for the South, and Flusser said that he behaved beastly in this last visit. Small wonder if he did behave beastly. Even the negro cook condemned him. Seeing the letters U. S. N. she said, "That means Uncle Sam's Nigger; Marster Charles, you is just as much a nigger now as I is. You has to do just what your marster Uncle Sam says to do."

Ordered to the Naval Academy as instructor in tactics and gunnery, he took the train for Annapolis. His farewell word, at the Louisville depot, to his brother and home friends, was an exhortation to be loyal to Lincoln and the Union. This talk was overheard and was unfavorably commented on by the train baggage smasher. That baggageman may have been a Confederate. Flusser's Union trunks containing his sword and uniforms disappeared, and Flusser always thought that baggageman guilty of offensive partisanship.

At Annapolis, his birth-place, he was ostracized by kinsmen and former Southern friends because of his outspoken Union sentiments. He shed tears of bitter grief—"grief for the ostra-

cizers"—he wrote. Commodore Isaac Mayo, a half uncle, resigned and died in the spring of 1861, and at the grave the minister praised and lauded Mayo's course in resigning from the navy "just in time to save his honor." At the close of the ceremonies, considering it a good opportunity, Flusser made before the assembly a strong Union speech, declaring that in his opinion the uncle had not died any too soon for his own good and the good of his country.

Those were troublous days at Annapolis, and the youngsters from the South (about one hundred), with the notable exceptions of Silas Terry, Evans, and Pegram, resigned to go with the Stars and Bars. The Academy was ordered to be transferred to Newport, and Flusser's energy in loading the outfit pleased Brigadier-General Butler, who earnestly requested Commodore Blake, the superintendent, to detail the strenuous young officer to the army as Captain of the Port of Annapolis in charge of the army transport service. The detail was made, and Flusser was in high feather for a time. He handled the transports with good results, and organized raiding parties, which captured vessels and supplies. The army needed locomotives, and Flusser went to the railroad at Bush River, captured and transported two locomotives by ferry boat to Annapolis, and in great glee ran them himself to the railway depot over the tracks laid by Butler, thus relieving the railroad blockade. Butler did not fail to commend his Captain of the Port.

The work at Annapolis became tame and safe with the arrival of many regiments. Flusser applied for sea duty and was assigned to the old ship *Jamestown*, which blockaded Savannah and Fernandina. Near the latter place, on August 5, 1861, he led a cutting-out expedition with Phythian, Geo. P. Houston, and Dr. Clymer in the boats. Pulling through the fire of shore batteries they burned the stranded bark *Alvarado* of Boston, preventing a valuable prize from falling into Confederate hands. Returning in the *Jamestown* to Hampton Roads for supplies he was ordered, January 9, 1862, to the command of the Commodore Perry, a Fulton ferry boat made into a man-of-war, and in command of the Perry he led the famous Goldsborough Expedition, sometimes called the Burnside Expedition, in the Sounds of North Carolina. Roanoke Island, strongly defended by forts, gunboats, and obstructions, was the place first attacked. It was captured February 8, 1862.

The battle of Roanoke Island was the best planned and the best executed co-operative movement of the Civil War. It was the initial and strategic victory, followed by others in a logical sequence: at Elizabeth, on the Pasquotank, February 10; at Edenton, on the Chowan, February 12; at Winton, on the Chowan, February 20; at New Berne, on the Neuse, March 14; at Washington, on the Tar, March 21; at Beaufort and Morehead City, commanding Beaufort Harbor, the southern entrance to the sounds from seaward, April 26; at Plymouth, on the Roanoke, May 16. In each of the foregoing affairs, except that at Beaufort, Flusser, in command of the Commodore Perry, played an important part. The net result of these victories was the control by the Federal Government of the extensive sounds and shores of North Carolina and the wonderfully ramified waterways, including the mouths of five important rivers. The navy thus had a stranglehold on North Carolina's water traffic and deprived the Confederate Army of supplies from many fertile bottom counties, and further, prevented the export of vast amounts of Confederate cotton, upon which the South was dependent for funds to pay her bonds, and to purchase arms and munitions of war. These eminently successful joint operations covered a period of about one hundred days. Goldsborough and Burnside received the thanks of Congress, and the naval officer second in rank, S. C. Rowan, was later made vice-admiral.

At Roanoke Island, the Union fleet was ready to attack the Confederate defenses by February 5, 1862. The next day was selected for the advance, but thick weather delayed the action for a day.

On February 7 the weather was clear and fine. The Union vessels steamed northward in double column, up the middle of Croatan Sound, toward the enemy's fleet and forts. The sound was about four miles wide, the water shoal, and the channel uncertain. Roanoke Island is curved with concave side to the west. It is ten miles long and three wide. Between it and the mainland lies Croatan. Fort Huger, on Wier's Point, and Fort Bartow, on Pork Point two miles below, with field batteries between the two forts, were shore defenses of the island. At Fort Bartow, the lower fort, a double row of piling extended westward across the sound toward Fort Forrest at Red-stone Point, on the main land or west shore. The piling obstructions were strengthened by

sunken hulks. Northward of the piling and behind it lay the Confederate fleet of eight gunboats. The bombardment by the Union fleet became general by noon of the 7th and ceased at dark, 6 p. m. The Confederate fleet retired behind Fort Huger, the upper fort. Fort Bartow was injured but not silenced. In the afternoon and night of the 7th the naval battery, under Midshipman Benjamin H. Porter, and Burnside's army of 10,000 men were landed at Ashley Harbor, some three miles below Fort Bartow.

On February 8, by 9 a. m. the Union land forces were well advanced toward the rear of Fort Bartow, and the naval bombardment began fast and furious. The Confederate vessels did not appear. Lieutenant Jeffers, with the *Ceres*, located the channel, or best water, through the obstructions; the piles and hulks were pulled aside, and about 4 p. m. Jeffers with several gunboats passed through. At 4.30 the land forces entered Fort Bartow, hoisted the Stars and Stripes, and Goldsborough signaled "Victory." The Confederate steamer *Curlew* was blown up by her crew at 5.15. At 7.15 Generals Burnside and Foster announced to Flag-Officer Goldsborough the capture of Roanoke Island, 40 guns and 3000 prisoners. This was Flusser's first battle. His vessel ran close to the batteries and expended all her ammunition. Goldsborough reported that he had to recall the *Commodore Perry* as she was very near the Pork Point battery. Flusser's vessel was hulled eight times. One shot passed through an empty powder tank in her magazine. By great good fortune she was not blown up and had only one serious casualty.

Commander Rowan, with the *Commodore Perry* under Flusser, and twelve other gunboats, went after the Confederate vessels that had escaped from Roanoke Island to Elizabeth City on the Pasquotank River. He attacked at 8 a. m. February 10, capturing one gunboat and the strong fort called Cobb's Point. Two gunboats escaped. The others were destroyed, and Elizabeth City was at once occupied by the navy. Flusser, in the *Commodore Perry*, was given the lead. He rammed and sunk the Confederate flagship *Sea Bird*, and captured her crew and officers. Flusser landed at Cobb's Point, hoisted the Union flag in place of the Confederate colors at 11.50 a. m., and spiked and dismounted the guns. The fight was a warm one. The two killed were on the *Perry*, and she had one-third of the total casualties. Flusser

cared for Midshipman William C. Jackson, fatally wounded on the C. S. S. Ellis, and buried him with all the honors of war. Jackson was a Virginia youngster at the U. S. Naval Academy and resigned in April, 1861, to "go South." His father, a minister, made grateful acknowledgment to Flusser. At this battle, John Davis, gunner's mate on the U. S. S. Valley City, "while at his station in the magazine when the shell penetrated the side and ignited the berth-deck as above reported, did cover a barrel of powder with his own person, thereby preventing an explosion." This is but one of many gallant deeds of that day. A story is told that the C. S. S. Ellis was run ashore and abandoned. Her captain, J. W. Cooke, afterwards commander of the C. S. S. Albemarle, left alone on deck, tried to defend himself by firing muskets at his enemies. Flusser, in a barge, boarded the Ellis and found Cooke still refusing to surrender, lying flat on his back, slashing about with his sword and kicking viciously. The men were about to shoot him but Flusser begged them not to and proposed that they disarm and tie the fighter. This was done with shouts of laughter, and Flusser's stratagem saved Cooke's life.

Alexander Murray with four gunboats, including the Commodore Perry, captured Edenton February 12.

Rowan, in the Delaware, and Flusser, in the Commodore Perry, ascended the Chowan to Winton on the 19th. The Delaware ran into a furious fire of musketry and artillery and was saved by the readiness of Flusser, who poured shrapnel into the enemy until the Delaware was extricated. Rowan returned in large force on the 20th and destroyed all defenses and stores at Winton. About this time Rowan sent Flusser in the Perry to Elizabeth City to watch that place and collect information. Rowan was apprehensive that the Confederates might send vessels from Norfolk to the sounds through the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal. Rowan reported that the army having failed to close the canal he had sent Flusser to do it and that he had accomplished the work in his usual able and energetic manner. Flusser reported that it would be easier to dig a new canal than to remove the obstructions he had placed in a day and a half.

Rowan attacked New Berne in a joint expedition March 13-14. Fourteen gunboats, including the Commodore Perry under Flusser, army forces, and naval batteries ashore, successfully repeated the tactics employed at Roanoke Island, and occupied New

Berne March 14. Thirty guns, many prisoners, two steamers, several loaded schooners, and a large quantity of stores were taken. The fighting on shore was severe. Rodney McCook, gallantly commanding naval howitzers, lost heavily. When the land forces arrived at New Berne the navy was in possession. The Commodore Perry led the naval procession as usual, but in passing the obstructions she struck on one of the iron-pointed stakes. This delayed her so that she was last in entering, with the stake sticking through her. Flusser was chagrined at being last in. When he arrived at the burning town he landed without orders, pressed townspeople into service, manned the fire-engines, and saved much of the place from the flames.

Plymouth was occupied by Union gunboats, including the Commodore Perry, May 16. It was an important town and a port of entry. It lies on the right bank of the Roanoke River eight miles from its mouth and Albemarle Sound. The possession of Plymouth sealed the Roanoke to traffic. Washington commanded the Tar River, and New Berne the Neuse River. Edenton lay at the mouth of Chowan River, whose tributary waters flowed through Southern Virginia. Norfolk was occupied by Union forces May 10. Thus the sounds of North Carolina and approaches, mouths of tributary rivers, and all important towns on its shores were in possession of the Union in May, 1862. This possession was hostile and it was maintained by a warfare that ended only in June, 1865. The last Union operation there was the raid of Commander Macomb in Roanoke River, June, 1865, when he burned a war vessel on the stocks at Halifax and recovered the little picket launch No. 1, in which Cushing had attacked and sunk, by a torpedo, the famous ram Albemarle.

The fight for possession of the sounds was serious business and Flusser was the most active man in it. He enjoyed the confidence of his eminent superiors, Rear-Admiral Lee and Commanders Murray and Davenport, and was given a rather free hand by them. Plymouth was his usual headquarters and depot. From there he controlled his little squadron. When there was nothing doing in aid of the army his vessels roamed the rivers, breaking up contraband trade. The total value of captured property, including cotton, was enormous. There were many expeditions, generally co-operative, and the soldiers seemed to enjoy the dashing hazardous adventures in narrow winding rivers, fighting guerrillas

and masked batteries on the banks, making marches and attacks where least expected by the enemy.

At Franklin, Va., Flusser's boats had a narrow escape from capture, October 3, 1862. Franklin was a town on the Blackwater River, about twenty miles by water north of the state line and on the Seaboard and Roanoke Railway, twenty-two miles west of Suffolk, Va. Major-General Dix arranged with Rear-Admiral Lee, commanding the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, for Flusser's co-operation and aid in destroying a bridge at Franklin. The burden of responsibility was placed on Flusser as Lee's orders left the practicability of the proposed operations to his judgment. Dix and Flusser agreed upon 6 a. m. October 3, for the joint attack. The Commodore Perry, Hunchback, and Whitehead arrived at a point six miles below Franklin in the night of the 2d, and were under way at 6 a. m. the next morning, the Perry ahead. While rounding the bend three-quarters of a mile below Franklin, at 7 a. m., the enemy posted in the woods on Crumpler's Bluff opened fire on them. They steamed past as quickly as possible. The Perry had run ahead and with a rapid discharge of shell and shrapnel kept down the fire of the enemy, and the other two boats passed the dangerous bend in safety. They found the river below Franklin obstructed and impassable. They lay at the obstructions, shelling Franklin and the banks generally, hoping for the sound of Union army guns, but no such welcome music reached their ears, and at 10.15 a. m. the perilous downstream passage began. Confederates, both soldiers and civilians, fired on them from every available point. Trees were felled across the narrow stream but the boats pushed through with a heavy head of steam and escaped. There were many acts of great bravery. Lieutenant W. B. Cushing, at this time and place, received his baptism of fire on the Commodore Perry under the eye of Flusser. When under fire, and the boat against the bank, the Confederates started to charge the Perry. Cushing, in charge of the forward gun, after every man of the gun's crew but himself had been driven to cover, killed, or wounded, deliberately depressed the muzzle and at the right moment fired a 9-inch canister that stopped the charge and saved the vessel from capture. Cushing was warmly commended. Flusser wrote to Davenport—"Cushing behaved like a gallant boy. I had frequently to oblige him to seek shelter from the enemy's fire. It was the severest fight I have been in. With

my usual good luck, I was not hit." E. R. Colhoun, who had resigned from the navy, commanded the Hunchback in this fight, as an acting lieutenant. Flusser warmly recommended that he be restored to the regular navy and stated that he would gladly serve under him. Colhoun was restored and outranked Flusser.

Major-General Dix reported to General Halleck that the army had waited for the navy at Franklin, on October 3, 1862, and had kept the enemy at bay the entire day, finally drawing off at night. Among Flusser's private papers, forty years after his death, was found a note from Dix, dated September 30, 1862, stating "We cannot be ready till about the 10th proximo." * Here was an issue of fact, and Flusser's tact in suppressing Dix's note marks him as a diplomat. When the messenger bearing Dix's note of September 30 to Flusser returned to Suffolk, late in the evening of October 2, reporting his failure to deliver the note to Flusser, as the gunboats had left for Franklin five hours before the messenger's arrival at the Chowan, Dix, or Peck, commanding at Suffolk, ordered a forced night march on Franklin. The Union troops reached that place October 3, about 1 p. m., seven hours late and three hours after Flusser's departure. Flusser's reports to Lee and Davenport mention Dix's note only as a request for naval co-operation in a proposed attack on Franklin, October 10, and state that he would not take part in the proposed movement without a positive order from Lee. The order was not given.

Official reports of this hazardous expedition are in Naval War Records, volume VIII, and Army War Records, volume XVIII. They are well worth reading.

* HEADQUARTERS DEPT. OF VIRGINIA.
7TH ARMY CORPS, FORT MONROE, VA., 30 SEPT. 1862.

Sir:

In consequence of some unexpected obstacles, we cannot be ready till about the 10th proximo. I will give you three days notice.

The bridge has not been reconstructed at Franklin for the Roanoke and Seaboard Railroad. But a floating bridge has been thrown across the Blackwater at that point. A large force has been sent down from Petersburg, but we think the bulk of it is at Zuni, the crossing of the Petersburg road. We are quite strong at Suffolk.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN A. DIX,
Maj. Genl.

*Lieut. Commander C. W. Flusser,
Comdg. U. S. Steamer Commodore Perry.*



UNITED STATES STEAMER MIAMI, AT ANCHOR IN THE SOUNDS OF NORTH CAROLINA, 1864.

The Plymouth squadron was strengthened by the addition of the Miami, a staunch government-built double-ender, with battery of eight 9-inch Dahlgrens and a 100-pounder rifle. Flusser assumed command of her May 8, 1863. The Miami had served with Porter's Mortar Flotilla below New Orleans, and at Vicksburg on the Mississippi River. She steered so badly that everything would get out of her way. Her capacity for taking a sheer and running away was phenomenal. It was finally discovered that she steered less badly when steaming stern foremost. Her photograph shows her at anchor with masts raking forward. The sailors called her the "Miasma."

Flusser, in command of the Miami and a small squadron, co-operated with the army thoroughly and heartily. *Every army department commander within whose territory he served asked that he be detailed to the army.* Butler asked in 1862 that he be detailed as Captain of the Port at New Orleans, saying—"He is another Farragut." Flag-Officer Goldsborough proposed taking Flusser from the sounds to command the Minnesota in the then approaching battle with the Merrimack, for the flag officer noted that the young Kentuckian conceived boldly and executed skilfully in times of extreme peril. Major-General Foster referred to him as Lion-Hearted Flusser. Flusser, writing to Davenport regarding an article in the New York *Herald* praising "C. W. Flusser the naval hero," stated—"I have no desire for newspaper notoriety. Such articles may be intended to do an officer good, but they injure his reputation among officers, those whose opinion he regards, and can only avail with the masses whose good opinions, if undeserved, he should despise, or at least be ashamed of possessing."

Flusser feared only one thing. He was afraid that he might fail to do the work or task allotted him. When he would come from his cabin fresh and clean from his daily morning bath, clear-eyed and smiling notwithstanding the trials and dangers before him, his presence was an inspiration to courageous deeds. One who knew him well has said that "he was not a Christian to hurt." An intimate friend once asked him if he never felt fear at the prospect of battle and possible death. Flusser, with his quiet smile, replied, "*I have no fear. When I retire at night, I make it right with my God. When I leave my cabin in the morning I am at peace.*"

Flusser was a harmonizer in times and places of discord. He was like Farragut in many respects, always doing his best with the means at hand, dealing with himself as severely as he dealt with others, quick and just in praise or blame, but inclined to mercy; a good judge of human nature, of evidence, of men and motives; a man of infinite patience, of mental exactness, of methodical reasoning, and yet possessed of intuitive faculties, active imagination and keen humor.

Flusser always had a "happy ship." The crew of the Miami was a motley crowd. There were a few regular seamen and ordinary seamen, but the bulk was made up of contrabands, boys, soldiers, and landsmen, and riff-raff picked up anywhere, and their captain called them "buffaloes." There was much sickness and some drunkenness. An officer and seven men, all drunk, came aboard the Miami one night and Flusser made the officer stand watch, as officer of the deck, every other watch for a week. The men had the wrinkles ironed out of them, and were given willow-bark tea as a tonic.

Flusser had decided views as to how the war should be conducted. He had extensive personal acquaintance in the South and his bump of location was large; that is, he had an extensive and accurate knowledge of geography, topography, directions, and distances and their relations to military strategy and tactics. One of his duties was the collection of Confederate information for his government. The Navy Department authorized him to subscribe for Southern newspapers. He passed the military lines whenever he wished. It is said that when he went on a flag of truce expedition he always took a jug of whiskey and a box of cigars, both scarce articles in the Confederacy. Flusser weighed the mass of information and misinformation that he collected, sifted out the truth, and sent it to Washington. One of his shipmates has stated that he was once, at least, called to the Navy Department, where he presented his views in person to President Lincoln, Welles, Fox, and Stanton. He kept the Navy Department informed of the ironclads under construction by the Confederates, and advocated light-draft ironclads or monitors to oppose those of the Confederates. His reports of the building of the Albemarle form a fair history of her.

Flusser proposed the arming of loyal North Carolinians, "whereby Confederate conscription might be prevented." His

grand strategy included the capture of Weldon and the cutting off of railway communications of the South with Richmond and Tredegar Foundry, where Confederate ordnance was made. He proposed driving a Union army wedge from Weldon to Raleigh. He claimed that this would transform the army of Northern Virginia into the army of North Carolina, relieve Washington, the capital, of all fear of attack, and cause the evacuation of Richmond. He deplored the anaconda policy of a long, straggling military line extending from Norfolk to New Mexico, and urged "that it was better to knock the Confeds. out than to try and starve them out."

The summer and autumn of 1863 were warm and sickly times in the sounds. The blockade was strictly maintained. Rumors of Confederate ironclads building on the Roanoke and Neuse Rivers were disquieting. Flusser kept the Department accurately informed of the progress of work upon these vessels, and he begged to be allowed to lead an expedition to destroy the ram building upon the Roanoke at Edward's Ferry. Major-General Butler pooh-poohed the idea of any rams attacking the Union forces in the sounds. On February 17, 1864, he wrote to Rear-Admiral Lee, "I do not much believe in the ram, either in the Roanoke or the Neuse." Flusser asked a faithful, intelligent negro, who had furnished him much information regarding the rams, and had worked on them as a mechanic, what he thought of the statement that there were no rams, and the negro solemnly replied, "Them that knows nothing, fears nothing." And so, without molestation the rams were completed and made ready for battle. The Neuse, at Kingston on the Neuse River, was commanded by Ben Loyall, Farragut's brother-in-law. The Albemarle, at Halifax on the Roanoke, was commanded by James W. Cooke, a personal friend of Flusser. They waited for the 1864 spring floods to carry them over the Union obstructions near the mouths of the rivers, and it was planned to join them in the sounds. Both were under the general control of John Taylor Wood, friend and classmate of Flusser. The Neuse failed to pass down. The Albemarle succeeded.

The story of the Albemarle is a part of the life story of the youth who built her, Mr. Gilbert Elliott, born in Elizabeth City, N. C., in 1843. In 1861 Elliott was a clerk in Norfolk to William F. Martin, lawyer and boat-builder. Elliott had not learned

the trade of boat-building, he inherited it. His mother's father, Charles Grice, was a shipbuilder a century ago. The nephew of Charles Grice was Francis Grice, the U. S. Naval Constructor who built the Niagara and many other naval vessels. Elliott enlisted in the army, but at the request of the Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Mallory, was furloughed to build Confederate vessels. Mallory contracted with this boy of twenty years to build the Albemarle. Her plans were drawn by John L. Porter. Her keel was laid in a cornfield near Edward's Ferry. She was put together by James F. Snell and Peter E. Smith, mechanical geniuses. She was a twin-screw ironclad ram, 158 feet long, 35 feet wide, 4-inch armor, 9 feet draft, and carried at each end a pivoted 6.4-inch Brooke rifle, which fired from three ports. The stern gun could fire astern or on either side. The bow gun could fire ahead or on either side. She was completed under the personal supervision of J. W. Cooke, and started for Plymouth on April 17, 1864, drilling her crew at the guns and driving home the last armor bolts at the same time. Elliott served on her as a volunteer, found the channel at night, and piloted her over Union obstructions and torpedoes at Plymouth. She glided uninjured past Union forts and batteries to meet the Union gunboats under Flusser, just below the town.

The Union boats and army were ready to defend New Berne, Washington and Plymouth, isolated posts, with small garrisons, tenable only by aid of gunboats. Plymouth was the strongest of the three forts. The Confederates chose to attack Plymouth, and began April 17, 1864. Flusser, with the Miami and Southfield, double-enders, 200 feet long, each armed with 9-inch Dahlgrens and 100-pounder rifles, aided the army. He had two little steam vessels, the Whitehead and Ceres, both useless as fighting craft. Their only useful service was scouting and transport work. It was pitiful to send these frail wooden craft against an ironclad. Rear-Admiral Lee had instructed thus, "when the enemy shows himself with a force on the river at Plymouth, Lieutenant-Commander Flusser, with the whole force present, will at once rush a sufficient distance above him, firing all arms as he goes, when he can with effect, and taking the enemy in reverse, attack it by ramming and firing." This plan of attack could not be carried out in the Roanoke River, 300 yards wide, with any prospect of success. Flusser's plan was simplicity itself. It was to lash the Southfield and Miami together by rope and *chain cable* across



CONFEDERATE STATES IRON CLAD RAM ALBEMARLE.

their forecastles, and attack the ram end on, receiving her between the two gunboats. In this position the gunboats could play their forward guns on the ram's shield, and by steaming ahead jam the ram's stern into the bank where she would be helpless. The plan was good. It was the best possible method of attack under the existing conditions, and it almost succeeded although it was carried out imperfectly and incompletely. The Miami and Southfield, by a cross-fire from above and below Plymouth, effectually protected that post until late at night, April 18. The ram was expected any moment, and the Ceres was stationed at Plymouth, the Whitehead at the Thoroughfare a few miles above Plymouth, as scouts. The Southfield was above Plymouth until the Confederate fire stopped, about 9 p. m. April 18. The Miami lay about half a mile below Plymouth. At 12.15 a. m. April 19, the Whitehead arrived by a roundabout passage "from below" and reported the ram as having passed Thoroughfare. The Southfield was gotten along the port side of the Miami at 1.30 a. m. Flusser, in order to avoid the tedious and slow work of lashing the boats by chain made the fatal, but under all the circumstances excusable, mistake of lashing his boats together by rope only. The reason for this decision was that the time required to release the lashings of chain and clear the decks for action was about twice the time needed to release the lashings of rope. He had determined this by actual experiment. In order to be ready in the shortest possible time to aid the army, only the rope lashings were passed, and the wooden ferry-boats, with men at quarters, lay waiting the ironclad. At 3.45 a. m. the ram met the two ferry-boats steaming toward her, and grazing the bow of the Miami forced her prow slantwise into the hull of the Southfield. The Albemarle began to back. She could not withdraw her prow from the Southfield, then forging ahead by her own steam and that of the Miami. The Albemarle was being forced to the left river bank, the three vessels swinging slowly to the right. The Albemarle acted as a lever with the fulcrum at the Miami's stem, and tended to pry the gunboats apart. The strain upon the gunboats' lashings was tremendous. The Southfield began to fill and to settle down on the Albemarle, slowly forcing the ram's bow under water till the surface was over the portsill of the forward port and water began pouring into the shield of the helpless ironclad. At the first alarm the cables of the Miami and Southfield were slipped and the boats driven upon the ram full

head, by order of Flusser. The Southfield received the ram's prow on the starboard bow, under her heavy guard. The prow penetrated ten feet, reaching the Southfield's fire-room. The Albemarle's shield lay abreast the forward guns of the ferry-boats, and received the fire of shot and shell from both. Flusser fired the first three shots, the third being a 10-second 9-inch Dahlgren shell. When about to fire Flusser was warned by the division officer, Hargis,—“There's a shell in that gun, captain.” “Never mind, my lad,” said he; “we will give them this first and solid shot after,” and pulled the lanyard. The shell struck the ram's shield a few feet from the muzzle of the gun, and exploded by impact, its flying fragments instantly killing Flusser, mortally wounding Hargis, and severely wounding several others. Flusser had written one week before, “In fifteen minutes after we get to close quarters my commission as commander is secured or I am a dead man.” He prophesied truly. He died with cheering words on his lips, gun lanyard in hand, victory almost won, for the ram was at his mercy while the lashings held, slowly sinking with the Southfield.

Commander Cooke reported that in this condition, unable to work his great guns, water running in the forward port, he “ordered all the crew on the top deck.” What for? Was it his intention to abandon the sinking Albemarle lying helpless under the pounding shot and shell of the ferry-boats? Just then the overstrained rope lashings parted, the Southfield swung to port, released the Albemarle, and slowly settled to the bottom of the Roanoke in about twenty feet of water. The ram re-manned her guns, fired two shells at the fleeing Union gunboats, and was left in undisputed possession of the field, the victor by reason of the parted lashings. The gallant and intrepid Cooke, with an untried vessel and crew, had won his laurels by the supreme test of success in battle. His victory was complete and decisive. The garrison at Plymouth surrendered April 20, with a large amount of provisions, stores, and ammunition, 25 pieces of artillery, and 1600 prisoners.

Flusser's death fell like a pall over the sailors and soldiers in the sounds. His remains were interred at New Berne with imposing military ceremonies April 23, later taken to Annapolis and temporarily placed in the Randall vault, and in 1868 finally placed with military honors on Bluff Point, in the Naval Academy ceme-

tery, being the first interment in this consecrated ground. In the box-vault on the crest of the knoll lies the dust of that good man and true "Lion-Hearted Flusser."

*"But the high soul burns on to light men's feet
Where death for noble ends makes dying sweet."*

[Newspaper Extract—Louisville *Courier-Journal*, June 15, 1864.]

Amongst our announcements of deaths, this week, will be found the names of three sons of Charles T. and Juliana Flusser—Ottokar, Charles W., and Guy—the first and last killed in the service of the enemy, the other dying gloriously in defence of his flag. The divided allegiance of this brave family is a forcible commentary on the sad results of a civil war. But however deep may be the parental sorrow, the mourning for a son like the gallant naval hero Flusser must be assuaged by the memory of his great services to his country, and the honor in which all true men hold his name.

DIED.

On the battlefield at Antietam Creek, Maryland, on the 17th of September, 1862, Ottokar Flusser, of the Fourth Texas Infantry, oldest son of Charles T. and Juliana Flusser, of this city.

On the 19th April, 1864, Charles W. Flusser, Lieut.-Commander U. S. N., second son of Charles T. and Juliana Flusser, from a wound received while in command of U. S. steamer Miami, in the attack on Plymouth, N. C.

On the 8th inst. on the battlefield at Mt. Sterling, Ky., Guy Flusser, Lieutenant Fourth Kentucky Confederate Cavalry, youngest son of Charles T. and Juliana Flusser.

APPENDIX.

LETTERS FROM FLUSSER TO HIS MOTHER AND SISTER.

[Before the battle of Roanoke Island.]

U. S. STEAMER COMMODORE PERRY,

PAMLICO SOUND, N. C., January 31, 1862.

My Darling Mamma:

I do not like to pain you by supposing the possibility of my being killed, but accidents will happen in the best regulated families, and the only pain I feel in the contemplation of so unhappy a termination is caused by uneasiness concerning you and Fan's future support and comfort.

* * * * *

I have the assurance, however, that the Lord will not let those want who love him and do his will. But this I hope and believe you both do.

* * * * *

Whatever individual accidents may occur, I can say with all hope for the side of the Union, may God aid the right cause! If God in His judgment assists the side on which there is order, law, the rights of the people, freedom of thought and of speech, and the hope of enlightened republicans throughout the world, then I am confident of victory. I think I could not go cheerfully into battle in a cause which I felt to be wrong, but now my heart and my reason tell me I am right, and I hold my life as the merest trifle when called upon to sacrifice it in so just a quarrel.

I regard all wars as more or less foolish and wicked in their inception, all engaged in them as more or less asses. If all men thought as I think, no armies would ever be mustered into the fields, no navies would ever sweep the seas. But unfortunately I am one of the most silly and uninfluential persons of the eight hundred millions on this globe. I accepted a position under the government of the United States a great many years ago. That position gave me a support and enabled me to render some slight assistance to my friends. To it I owe the little education (which ought to have been much better but that I lamentably wasted time and neglected opportunity) I have received. It also, as the wise world goes, conferred on me a certain standing in society, and which *en passant* none more heartily despises than myself. To be brief, it furnished me many substantial benefits and would have given me others had I stretched forth my hand to receive them. It seems to me that the Government has received a poor return from me for all these favors. My life has always been hers to command, but she has never called upon me to risk it. Now the existence of the State is imperilled, and why? Because a few unprincipled men, seeing that their employment was gone when the party was defeated, artfully wrought upon the feelings of an excitable minority, contemptible in numbers, and falsely persuaded them that their best interests, their liberties, were endangered under that government whose laws were so mild that none but the wicked ever felt them—under that government framed by the wisdom of Washington and the noble Fathers of the Revolution, that our country might be the abiding place of Liberty and a refuge for the oppressed of all lands: and finally under that government which is the slave of the people, and which, even if it so desired, was perfectly impotent to injure them, since the party to which this minority belonged was in the ascendant in both houses of the National Legislature. These leaders, without principle, without patriotism, would rather see their country—the greatest State of the world—torn into contemptible fragments each incapable of self-support and existing only through courtesy or forbearance of European nations, and would rather see this great country bleeding at every pore, her mothers childless, her wives widows, her houses in ashes, her altars profaned, than that they should forego for four short years the praise of idiots and the spoils of office.

* * * * *

Well! to resume about myself, my country has done great things for me as I have shown. Would it not be the vilest ingratitude in me to desert her in the hour of need? To be selfish, what has Maryland done for me? What has Mississippi done for me? that I should take their side against a government that has supported, educated, and protected me, and "reposed special trust and confidence in my patriotism and fidelity and abilities?" But I state the question wrongly. I should not say what has Maryland or Mississippi or Kentucky done for me—I should rather say what has the factious, dissatisfied minority of these states done for me that I should prove a traitor to my trust, a rebel to my country?

* * * * * * *

Doubtless you would like to know why I have written the above. You may think, though I hope you would judge me more charitably, that a lame conscience needs many props: that a doubting mind and infirm purpose need much show of reasoning to convince and uphold. True. But this is not my condition. I am fully persuaded of the justness of my cause, and the righteousness of my decision. My intention in the whole of this letter is to let you see that I am, with my whole heart, on the side of the Union, and to try and persuade you that I am right.

I fear, Mamma, that your heart is with the other party, with the side on which poor Guy and poorer Ott are engaged. I pity Guy with my whole heart for the choice he has made, and I would not, for the world, believe him other than honest. I know him to be pure-minded and of too ardent a soul. He has been persuaded that the South is right, and he is ready and anxious to risk his life in what he thinks is her "Cause." Poor Ott I pity also.

I should above all things, Dearest, prefer to have you with me in my opinion of this war and its causes. Women, I know, seldom reason. Where their affections lie all things are centered. It is well for the happiness of man that it should be so. But to me "Our Side" seems so palpably right, that it seems a perversion of judgment to doubt it, and I cannot bear to think of you as opposed to it.

I do not ask you to love me more than Guy. If you loved me more than Guy, you would need no reasoning to persuade you I am right—you would *feel* it, for Guy is your youngest son and it is natural that you should love him most tenderly. He is also full of noble, generous thoughts, is a manly fellow, which is a great thing in every woman's eye, and greater in a mother's! while I am old and mediocre and ugly and selfish. Guy has been at home and has endeared himself to you by his presence and by his tenderness, while I have been away, and when at home most uninteresting. I can not blame you for your choice. I approve it myself. But it is inexpressibly painful to me to think that my mother, and such a mother, should be opposed to me in this holy cause. Just look at what I have said as to the cause of this war, just look at the facts elsewhere, throw all feeling aside, and you *must* be persuaded that this government is right.

Oh Pshaw! All this about Guy and myself is silly—weak—very weak. It is, after all, only a difference of opinion and one may not be responsible altogether for one's opinion. Age and Education, association and local

prejudice, will have a great deal to answer for to pure reason and impartial judgment, when the final account is rendered. And it may be that many of us will in these find our excuses. My letter has been suggested by the tone of Hope's, which, though he said not one unkind word, seemed to me much less cordial than his former ones. I hope it was not intentional. In this is the bitterness of this unnatural strife. Not that brother should oppose brother, nor that father and son meet face to face on the field of battle, but that each should impugn the other's motive. There are many friends of mine on the other side whom I may meet in fight, some whom I expect to meet, men of the highest honor, but faulty (in my opinion) judgment, and who would look on me as something vile, while I can not help but love and admire them. There is a great deal of hatred on their side, there exists none on ours. We are fighting for a noble principle. They persuade themselves that they are doing the same. They peril their all without a cause and then rally to the cry of "Defend your firesides." Oh! the everlasting negro! Would that he were in Africa, Christianized! To me the hatred which the Southerners feel for us is horrid. If I were to meet one of my friends on the field of battle, and he should intentionally give me a death wound, I should not hate him, nor feel the least resentment but should say, "Well, old fellow, I forgive you, for you thought you were doing your duty." But if I should injure one of them, he would damn me with his latest breath. You may be sure that this difference of feeling is general in the two armies. I never hear a sailor or a soldier speak of the rebels as if he hated them: they are all anxious for a brush with them, but they seem to regard it as a jolly lark or as a matter of stern, unpleasant duty, according as levity or seriousness and thoughtfulness preponderate in the disposition of the individual.

It is past eleven at night: my fire has been out for an hour: it is a rainy, nasty night. My feet are cold, and an unpleasant sensation in my throat reminds me that I am catching cold. So, good-night my darling, and may the Lord of Heaven and Earth watch over you and protect you from all manner of harm. I kiss you, dear Mamma.

I do not know when I shall finish this scrawl.

PAMLICO SOUND, N. C., February 5, 1862. Night.

My darling Mamma:

We got underway to-day and ran some thirty or forty miles up the Sound to this place, where we anchored at sunset. To-morrow our work will probably commence. From late, but rather meagre information a severe fight is now anticipated. So much the better. I called my pilot, one of the seamen of the vessel, a North Carolinian, into the cabin this morning, and directed him to run the steamer as near the batteries as the water will allow her to go.

A vessel has the best chance with a battery when close to. Besides, I have some IX-inch shells, filled with 400 musket balls each, and a bursting charge of powder, which are terrible at short distances against exposed bodies of men.

Feb. 6.

I intended to write you a long letter this evening, bidding you a loving farewell, etc., but I am quite unwell—have a shocking cold, and feel very tired, and sleepy, so I must close. I will only say that the cause for which I risk and may lose my life is just, and I beg you to think of me (if I am killed) as dying happily, so far as I am concerned, and only disturbed and anxious as to your and Fan's fate.

I commend you both to the care of a loving and merciful Father.

Say to Guy and to Ott that their choice has been a source of great pain to me. Nevertheless, I believe that they have both done what they thought was right, and I do not blame them, nor do I love them the less. Bid them both good-bye for me, give them my love.* * * * Give my love to all at home and at Hope's. Kiss them for me and say I loved them well.

I kiss you my darling and pray that our Father in Heaven may keep you from want here, and gather you into His Fold when this life is over.

Your affectionate son,
CHARLES.

[Before the battle of Roanoke Island.]

PAMLICO SOUND, N. C., February 5, 1862.

My dear Fan:

It is an axiom of mine that a man should have plenty of sleep the night before fighting, therefore I intend to go to bed soon—it's now half-past nine in the evening. But my enevelopes are thin and the sheets which I wrote some days since want a cover, and I may as well put a few lines on it. So here goes. I have just closed Ma's letter. If I am killed to-morrow let none persuade you after I am gone that the cause of the Union is not just, but uphold it with all your strength. With that belief firm in the hearts of the people we are a great nation: uproot it, and presto, change, we are metamorphosed into miserable, weak confederacies of petty, jealous sovereignties, an inviting, easy prey to every greedy third-class power. Strive after true religion, Fan, with all your might. (If 'tis only the widow's mite, 'tis your all—the best can do no more.) We expect a fight to-morrow; I am tired, have a bad cold, and must go to sleep. Good-bye, dearest Fan. Comfort Ma if I fall. I am not worth mourning for; believe this and then you can persuade her.

Your loving brother,
CHARLES.

February 8, 1862.

I didn't fall, thank God.
Love to all. In great haste,

Your affectionate brother,
CHARLES.

[*Battle first day at Roanoke Island, February 7, 1862.*]

OFF ROANOKE ISLAND, N. C., Midnight, February 7, 1862.

My darling Mamma:

I ought to be asleep, as I have plenty of work before me for to-morrow, but I must tell you that I am safe and uninjured after this day's hard fighting. We have been engaged all day with a battery on shore and a small squadron of rebel steamers. I have fired to-day from two guns one hundred and ninety-six shells and shrapnel—all that I had. I have been nearer the enemy than any other vessel all day long. My boat is knocked to pieces and I have only one serious accident to report—one of my men has a leg broken by a splinter. I have four or five round shot in the hull, and four in the upper works. The Lord has been good to me; other steamers have lost officers and men. One round shot plunged directly through my magazine; had it been a shell I should probably not have written this note. The enemy fortunately fired no shell from their battery or my boat and others would have been utterly destroyed. My men are much provoked that we were not supported by other steamers. Unfortunately I expended all my loaded shell at the very time when, if I had had plenty, I would have silenced the battery. I had set the fort on fire and nearly silenced their guns when I looked about me and saw Lieutenant Chaplin close to in the propeller Valley City. I hailed him and asked him how he was getting on. He answered, "Oh! first rate," and proposed that I should take the lead, that he would follow me and we would take the battery. I sang out "Agreed," and started in toward the enemy, but had not closed more than three hundred yards when it was reported to me that the loaded shells were all gone. So I had to haul off to fill the remainder. While I was away I told the flag-officer why I came out, and he ordered me to fill the shells and follow him in, but I soon left him far behind and toward dusk had the honor to have the entire fire of the fort and two rebel steamers directed solely against my vessel. Had I not hoped to silence the battery I might have sunk one or both of the steamers, but as it was they peppered me and I did not give them a single shot in reply.

The battery was fought beautifully, the quarters of the men and officers were burning the greater part of the day, still they stuck to their guns and served them admirably. I fired myself the larger number of shots from this vessel, and can't help saying that I think the shells were well thrown.

Good-night, Mamma, and God bless you.

CHARLES.

[*Just after battle of Elizabeth City, February 10, 1862.*]

OFF ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., February 14, 1862.

My darling Mamma:

I am now here in command of three vessels, the remainder of the squadron having gone somewhere down the Sound. I have again to thank God for preserving my life and giving us victory. We met the enemy on the

ioth instant, a short distance below Elizabeth, and protected by a four-gun battery. They had five steamers; we had nine, but only two or three of ours got up in time to fight the rebel steamers.

I was given the lead. I singled out the largest vessel, Commodore Lynch's flagship, the steamer *Sea Bird*, and ordered my pilot to run her down.

When about two hundred yards from her, and after passing through the fire of the battery and giving them some good shots in return, I fired a nine-inch shell at her, which struck her just amidships, at the water line, passed through her as if she was so much paper, and exploded a great distance beyond. I then called away boarders and ran for her, my men picking up their muskets, pistols and cutlasses for a hand-to-hand fight. When fifty yards or more from her she hauled down her flag and her commander appeared on the upper deck holding open his coat to signify that he had surrendered. I immediately ordered the helm put a-port and the steamer stopped to avoid striking him, but my men were so crazy with excitement and made so much noise that the helmsman could not hear, and so plump into her we went, smashing in her whole port bow. My men immediately jumped on board and I had to follow to restrain them from injuring the prisoners. The captain surrendered to my vessel, stated that he was in a sinking condition, and asked me to rescue his officers and men. I was anxious to secure another steamer and gave the order to back out and pursue when, to my inexpressible annoyance, I found that as we struck the *Sea Bird* the fastenings of our anchor went and the anchor had gone to the bottom; so we were anchored and I could not move. The men were frantic with excitement and for ten minutes I could not get any one to slip the chain, then one of the engineers unshackled it, I cut the line which fastened us to our prize with my sword, and was just leaving when her captain came to me for the second or third time and begged me, for God's sake, not to leave his men to drown; so to save them I reluctantly gave up the pursuit. While I was at anchor engaged taking the prisoners from the sinking vessel two small rebel steamers ran around me, firing with musketry at my men. I could have sunk them both with one gun each, but my men were so wild that I could not get them to their quarters at the great guns. One of these steamers came up on my starboard quarter, only ten or fifteen yards off, where there was not a man but myself, and tried to train a great gun on us. I repeatedly called the men to their guns, but they would not come, so as a last chance, for I felt that if the gun was fired I was destroyed, I drew my revolver, a small-sized Colt's, and fired at the captain of the enemy's gun. I fired three or four shots with deliberate aim and saw the captain of the gun and the man on his left fall; whether I hit them or not I do not know, I only know that the gun was not fired.

The other little beggar came on the port bow, and her officers stuck muskets and pistols out of their room windows and fired at my men and officers. I had to use my revolver on her also. One of the rebel steamers, commanded by a very smart officer and good friend of mine, escaped. She might have been taken, but she was between the town and a pursuing

steamer, and our officers would not fire for fear of injuring the property of the citizens. Yet the secessionists set the town on fire as they left. I would have captured Parker but for the fact of my anchor being cut adrift by the collision with the Sea Bird. As soon as we passed the battery we had an enfilading fire on it which the rebels would not stop to receive, but ran like good fellows, led by Lynch, who had given his vessel to his second in command and taken charge of the battery, in order that he might make his escape when the fire became too hot for him. I captured forty-two prisoners on board the Sea Bird, seven of them officers; one of them an old acquaintance of mine in our Navy, and who was glad to fall into my hands; another, an assistant surgeon, from Kentucky, E. Holt Jones, who knows all the people in Louisville whom I know. We released them all on parole, and I told Jones to remember me to all the good folks in Louisville, where he hopes soon to be. I sent Lynch his cloak by Dr. Jones. I do not know whether or not he will thank me for it.

I had two men killed and three wounded slightly. Singular to say, both of my men were shot directly under the eye, and killed instantly. One officer was shot in the face, but having a hard cheek the ball glanced and did him no injury. Another officer received a slight flesh wound in the leg. Two of my prisoners were wounded seriously, and one of them mortally by the premature discharge of a gun. One of the rebel prisoners, Lieutenant Cooke, formerly of our Navy, told me that his men had orders to fire at the officers. I told him that I had given the same orders to my soldiers, for I thought his *men* were half inclined to come over to us. I think now their soldiers and sailors are nearly tired of the war. My prisoners (the officers) thanked me when they left for my kind treatment. I gave them plenty of whisky to console them and surrendered my cabin to them. Whisky, by the way, is a scarce article here; it sells at four dollars a gallon and can hardly be found at that price. The poor here are suffering severely. We have had to give away some provisions to save them from starving. I gave a man yesterday one of the blankets from my bed and a quilt which Dr. Jones left aboard, and which I think came from Lynch's cabin.

I believe I might have talked over some of the prisoners; they would have been easily persuaded; but delicacy forbade me to approach such a topic. Yesterday four of our steamers went up to Edenton and destroyed some great guns, the troops flying as we appeared in town. While destroying the guns an old lady came up and claimed my protection. "Protection against what or whom, Madam?" I asked. "Why," said she in great astonishment, "Are you not going to burn the town down?" I told her we came there to fight those in arms against us and to destroy arms, etc., and not to injure helpless people, but it was only after repeated asseverations of our good-will toward the people that I could induce her to leave me.

I had the principal men of the place before me and made them a strong Union speech, to which there was no response, probably because my men were not very far off, but *I think* because it was unanswerable. Ah, a war is the thing to develop one's talents! I never before dreamed that I had

the impudence to mount a platform in the open street and make a political speech. Whether my arguments convinced them or not I do not know, but I do know that the price of turkeys was raised in an hour from \$1.75 to \$4.00 a pair. We brought away six bales of contraband cotton. I forgot to mention that in addition to my man-of-war prize, I captured on the 10th a schooner, and another night before last, loaded with corn bound to Norfolk, worth about four thousand dollars. I have been engaged all day destroying gun carriages and a gun. We have taken or destroyed since we left Roanoke some thirty great guns, beside a large number of muskets and other small arms. The rebel steamers had rifled cannon far superior to ours at long range, but we sold them by coming to close quarters. Though we have not five hundred men in our nine steamers, rumor has it that we landed ten thousand men at Elizabeth City and as many more at Edenton. The rebels have a great scare on, and if we follow up our victories promptly the whole State is ours. It is said that we have much severer fighting to do than we have yet done. The Lord has kindly protected me from all injury so far, and I pray that he will keep me from harm in our future battles, as I pray every night for you and Fan. It is late, dearest, and my fire is out. Good night. I kiss you, dearest Mamma.

Your affectionate son,
CHARLES.

U. S. S. COMMODORE PERRY, NEW BERNE, N. C., March 15, 1862.

My darling Mamma:

We took this place yesterday after some severe fighting on the part of the Army; our part was easily done. The loss of the Army is large; the Navy lost no one.

The defenses were immense, and I can only account for our success by believing Providence to be with us.

My boat was ahead during the fighting, but after the hauling down of the rebel flags I grounded in attempting to pass the barricade which the rebels had placed in the river, and was last in at the triumphal entry. Nevertheless, I succeeded in capturing a Confederate schooner, unarmed but valuable. Tell Fan to destroy the copies of the reports I sent her to keep. I altered my report.

I am sore in every muscle. It has been a great effort to write this.

Your affectionate son,
CHARLES.

P. S.—The rebels, as is their custom now, in their flight set fire to the town in many places and burned the fine railroad bridge over the river; the latter was to save themselves from pursuit.

As soon as we anchored I took a boat, went ashore, pressed every man I saw, white and black, into service, manned the engines, and succeeded in allaying the fierceness of the flames. This was done without orders and in answer to the prayers of the poor people who begged me for protection. Yet we are called Hessians, vandals, and all other vile names.

Good-bye.

U. S. S. COMMODORE PERRY,

ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., 10 h. p. m., 28th April, 1862.

My darling Mamma:

The Commodore has been here for some days past and I have spent several hours of each day on board of his vessel talking over plans of attack and defense, etc., etc.—all nonsense. But my time has been so much engaged that I have had no opportunity to write you. Time flies even while one talks nonsense. I wish he would go away, though he's a good fellow and thinks I am a trump.

You may judge how much he esteems me, when I tell you that I have command here of eight or nine steamers, with a chance of meeting the enemy, while four officers, my seniors, command at different points, only their single ships. Or, rather that was the case for several weeks, but now the second in command has gone home on sick leave, the third to get a new steamer, and the other two remain as stated above. The reason of the beggars not complaining is that they think I will be made a commander—another that they like me.

I do not expect promotion, but if the enemy will only send some iron-clad gunboats down Dismal Swamp Canal while I am in command here, I think I should soon stand a fair chance of going up to next grade.

Remember, Mamma, all this is *entre nous*, *sub rosa*, etc., etc. The above is terribly egotistical, but I am pleased with my egotism when writing to you—for to you I like to write my thoughts as they are, and not as other men hear them expressed. Though I fear of late I have spoken my thoughts rather too plainly of several persons, from any one of whom I might receive a challenge. But do not be alarmed, that folly is dead with me. I don't think I should fight another duel. Nevertheless, I went from here the other day to Roanoke Island to take a colonel in the Army to task for a disagreeable remark with every prospect of a duel ahead. Some days since, I arranged an expedition for a certain service to South Mills. Five regiments were sent up, and after whipping the enemy, retreated during the night, on learning that he was reinforced. The enemy thought that they were surrounded and retreated also. The expedition retreated without having accomplished its object. I early received the news of the enemy's running and hastened down the river to bring back the army—but too late—they had left two or three hours before I arrived. The night of their arrival here, I was in a small boat, landed them all, men, horses, carts, and field pieces, worked all night long, and at day-break received word from the general in command that it was absolutely necessary to destroy a certain bridge. I got underway in five minutes, ran up the river and tore away the bridge—ran right through it with my steamer. I then pushed ahead with the small steamers without orders, and in one of them, after immense labor, got within a couple of miles of the battle-field, when an order reached me by a rowboat from the commodore to have my forces out of the river by nightfall. This was impossible. The river was so narrow that after receiving the order I ran a quarter of a mile ahead to get a chance to turn, found I could not turn,

and had to drop down stern foremost upwards of a mile before I could turn a boat ninety feet in length. I did not get down to my own vessel till next morning, when I learned of the retreat of our forces and received an order to remain in the river till noon to prevent an advance of the enemy on the army while embarking. While here I picked up two officers and forty soldiers who had fallen down, exhausted by the long march, and who were very glad to be saved from a Richmond tobacco-house-jail. I planned the expedition, landed the forces, and covered their retreat. And after all this a miserable colonel remarked to one of the subordinate naval officers who was engaged in embarking the runaways, that he was —— *tired of doing the Navy's fighting for them*. As soon as I heard of the remark I asked permission of the commodore to go to Roanoke Island (I had some duty there also, and combined duty and pleasure). Leave was granted and away I went. I could not find the officer who made the remark, but I said to Colonel Hawkins, who commands the post, that in my opinion, the person who made that remark was much indisposed to fight at all—in any cause—and that he was an ass, all of which I desired him to repeat to the person offending.

* * * * * * *

On the morning when the bridge was destroyed, as I moved up the river, I caught some of the enemy's cavalry napping: the men were in a house, about three-quarters of a mile from the river bank, and their horses in the stable near, some men just saddling their beasts when I caught sight of them and sent some IX-inch and 30-pounder shell into the house and into the stable. It was a beautiful sight to see them in their bewilderment run first to the stable and then away again without their horses. I fired every shot myself and I know they told. I do not think many were hurt, but I struck the house beautifully. They do not send their troops quite so near now. At present the town is held by the naval forces without a single man beng ashore, notice having been given the enemy that if he entered the town we should fire on him. We had allowed him to hold it and spy out our movements quite long enough.

Apropos of spies, these secession troops, I fancy, think nothing is known to us of what they do on shore; but they scarcely make a movement of which I am not informed and sometimes even know those which are contemplated. I had a man on shore the other night who went into the camp and talked with the soldiers unsuspected. A few nights after that he was again on board of my vessel, and in a few nights more was here guiding our troops against them. So much for keeping a good lookout on the enemy.

It is now 12 o'clock and time to say good-night.

* * * * * * *

Remember me kindly to all who care for me. I do not wish to hear anything more about Guy's being in a loyal state, unless he is a prisoner or comes to deliver himself up to the United States authorities.

If I was at home and knew of his skulking about the city, seeking

recruits or acting the spy, I should have him arrested though he were shot for it. I love him but I love my country (or myself—I don't know which it is) more.

Again, love to all. Ask Miss Sarah to write to me. Write yourself, frequently, and make Fan write often.

May God bless you, dearest, is the constant prayer of

Your affectionate son,

CHARLES.

U. S. S. COMMODORE PERRY,

PASQUOTANK RIVER, N. C., May 13, 1862.

My dear Mamma:

* * * * *

I've been moving armies and fleets, running off negroes, buying up information, and been so busy withal for the last few weeks that I have not had time to be sick, and am really much better. Only last night I started off into the country with 120 men, went back some three miles from the boats, taking from the houses on the roadside all the men and carrying them with us, to prevent them from giving information to the rebel troops in the vicinity of our movements. Arrived at our destination, the house of a farmer where was concealed the apparatus stolen from one of the Government lighthouses, the building was surrounded, and he was aroused and summoned to deliver it up to us. He made no objection to giving up the plunder, but begged me to prevent my men from insulting his wife, who was in a delicate condition, so called, I presume, because women are then, by a kind provision of Providence, most robust. I placed a guard over the house with orders to allow no one to leave it, and none of my people to enter. We then pressed his carts into service and with two others pressed from the neighbors we started back, making the farmer and a negro drive the carts. We were gone from our vessels eight hours, and not a Southern soldier knew anything of our doings till next morning, though our farmer driver, who was a warm secessionist, cried "gee" and "haw" to his oxen loud enough to wake the dead. My men were greatly disappointed at not meeting a newly-raised cavalry company which generally scours the country round about the scene of our operations at night. Maybe the scamps did know of our doings, but deeming prudence the better part of valor preferred to keep out of sight.

Our secession friend was so surprised at the kind treatment he received at our hands that he offered, unsolicited, to bring down any part of the apparatus which a more patient search in the daytime might reveal. We marched, going out, three miles in quick time, and I think I was as much fatigued on our return as I should be after three months on shore from a march of twenty-five miles.

PLYMOUTH, ROANOKE RIVER, May 16, 1862.

Since writing the above I have taken possession of three rebel towns, and captured a rebel steamer loaded with provisions for the Southern Army and the church bells of this place, which were en route to Richmond to be cast into howitzers for the rebel Army. To-day I captured a rebel major for violating his parole and distressing Union people. It is very pleasant to witness the childish delight of these poor people at being rid of the horrid despotism which has ground them into the dust for months past. To sell us an egg or a fowl is made punishable with death. If a man dares to say he likes the Union as it was, he is shut up in prison far from his family and tried for treason—sometimes executed without trial. Thank God, our time has come now and I intend to improve it. I shall arrest every prominent secessionist near the water courses of Albemarle Sound. With four boats I penetrated yesterday to the head of the Cashai River, where none but the smallest vessels have heretofore been. The people could scarcely credit the evidence of their eyes when we appeared off the place. I found a quantity of Confederate stores, which I ordered distributed to the poor. I at first intended burning them, but a poor widow begged me with tears in her eyes not to set fire to the house containing the stores for fear her home would be destroyed. I said, "Do not be uneasy, Madam, rather than burn your dwelling the Confederate Army should have the stores." As I turned away she said, "God bless your cause, sir." And I thought the widow's blessing of more value to the cause than many times the stores.

I remained at Windsor until near sunset, and to the surprise of the people managed to turn my steamers; they all said the river was not so wide as the boats were long.

Some silly fellow said if we staid twenty-four hours there we should have some soldiers to meet us, on which I told the people if they would get us up a dance I should remain all night. If the soldiers had wanted to meet us they had the chance, for I moved only a mile down the river, when it became so dark that I had to tie up to a tree for the night.

While going up we frequently saw the second steamer ahead of us going in a directly opposite direction to that we were steering, and while she was in a direct line not fifty yards from us, by the river she was four hundred, sometimes less, sometimes more. We could touch at the same time the trees on both banks and had to cut away limbs which projected over the stream. These North Carolinians now think we can run on a heavy dew or a moist sponge.

To-night I received information that some 200,000 pounds of bacon for the Confederate Army was stored near here and being rapidly removed, also that a large quantity of wheat was at a mill hard by, waiting its turn to be converted into flour for the same delightful gentlemen. To-morrow, God willing, I shall destroy both.

To-day I took the first drink for eight years. The doctor has prescribed for me a glass of Scuppernong wine three times daily. I do not know that I shall take it, though I fancy it might do me good.

* * * * *

Some Union people here said to me to-day, "Only stay here and protect us, sir, and we will send you all the poultry, eggs, milk, fruit, and whatever else we have that you want." One man said, "I do not wish you to pay me anything." "But," I said, "I desire to pay, sir, for whatever I get." He declared he would take no money from me, that he had plenty—silver and gold. He said when Sumter fell he knew what must follow, and he had never received any Confederate money. Confederate notes will scarcely go here now at all. The people here are in my power, for I have possession of the rivers and can cut off their supply of fish, on which they principally subsist. I have informed the mayor of this place that if reliable proof is brought to me that the fish reach the Confederate Army I shall seize all the seines and break up the business.

What a glorious fight our Navy had near New Orleans. Beside it, our operations here sink into insignificance, though we have taken two hundred guns. A good friend of mine there commanded the Cayuga. The papers will tell you how she was handled.

The Navy, thank God, has performed its part well in this war. I seized in the customhouse here yesterday the apparatus of a light-boat which the rebels had stolen. I've written enough. Good-bye.

Your affectionate son,
CHARLES.

U. S. S. COMMODORE PERRY,

OFF PLYMOUTH, N. C., May 28, 1862.

My darling Mamma:

* * * * *

I have tried to do everything for the Cause here, but obstinacy, prejudice, and laziness on our own side have defeated nearly all. I feel confident that I could have this State in the Union at this time had I had the distribution and control of the Army and Naval forces down here. I have written and recommended till I am tired and disgusted, and I only wish my letters were public instead of unofficial. If my advice had been acted on we might now have several loyal regiments of North Carolinians in the field. I have begged for arms, and promised to raise men if they could be armed and equipped. There are plenty of muskets and plenty of ammunition lying idle, but for some unknown reason the good people of this State cannot be supplied. One regiment of North Carolinians would be worth three regiments of Northern soldiers to our cause, by reason of the good influence they would exert on their families, their friends, and the people of their State.

But, bah! I'm disgusted and can't write more. Good-night.

Your affectionate son,
CHARLES.

U. S. S. COMMODORE PERRY,

PLYMOUTH, N. C., August 4, 1862.

My dear Mamma:

The enemy has been threatening to come down and destroy this town lately, so we have been on the *qui vive*.

As they delayed so long the execution of their threat, we went up after them.

We had a running fight of an hour, the rebels firing with muskets from a high bank where they were concealed.

They killed two of our men and wounded eight or ten. They report none injured, but they buried six men in Williamston the next day, whom they reported as belonging to us.

I landed at Hamilton with one hundred and fifty men and a field piece and offered them fight, but they declined.

I have been twice since then to Williamston getting an opportunity to throw some shells at the rebels from a distance, but they skedaddled on our near approach.

The rebel cavalry skulk about here to capture our officers who wander outside our pickets, but I drove twenty miles before breakfast two or three days since unmolested.

I was chased into town the other day by some of our own cavalry visiting from Washington, N. C., whom I mistook for secesh. The colonel, an old friend of mine, had a hearty laugh at me.

I think I was never in a more unpleasant position for fifteen minutes. I had a lady and infant under my charge, the former very much frightened. I was very anxious to give the alarm to our troops in town, anxious, of course, not to be captured, and yet could not leave the frightened girl. When we reached the nearest picket, the cavalry, yet awhile believed to be secesh, were not more than five hundred yards behind me.

Your affectionate son,

CHARLES.

U. S. S. MIAMI, PLYMOUTH, N. C., April 12, 1864.

My dear Fan:

* * * * *

The rebs promise to fight us this week with the ironclad ram, for which I have been watching so long, and eleven thousand men. I wish our garrison was one-third as strong. I don't know whether the scamps will come or not, but will be prepared by day after to-morrow to give them a good fight so far as the boats are concerned. The long-shore people must look out for themselves while we afloat destroy the Sheep—the name we've given the ironclad because we thought it would not show fight. It will prove to be a formidable antagonist, and we will have our hands full to whip it. Fortunately it will not be many minutes after her appearance before the result of the passage at arms is known.

I wrote the admiral to send me some good shot to penetrate her armor and I should need no more boats. Fact is I look on her as peculiarly my own. I am prepared for a very desperate fight, and think unless Fortune frown outrageously on me my arrangements will defeat her.

The plan to fight her was the result of long thought and some anxiety.

While I was lying sick abed she was reported coming down the river. I was awake and trying to read, but was not satisfied with my preparations, and read without understanding, thinking all the while of her. At 4 o'clock in the morning I had found what I wanted, and turning to a friend who was smoking by my bedside, and who was formerly in the Navy, I gave him my plan. He expressed his delight and his entire confidence of success. The next day it was made known to several officers, and its advantages were so evident that all immediately approved. I feel gratified at having received the happy thought. I think there is no instance on record of a fight on the plan I intended to pursue.

In fifteen minutes after we get to close quarters my commission as commander is secured or I am a dead man.

I am aware that the result of these rests with God. I shall not fail to ask his aid, but do not think the rebel cause so good that we have any reason to fear the end.

* * * * *

Your affectionate brother,
CHARLES.

[*Letters from Flusser to Davenport.*]

U. S. S. MIAMI, PLYMOUTH, N. C., April 17, 1864.

Sir:

The enemy are about the town. They have fired on us to-day pretty lively. The Ceres, (with her usual bad luck), had one killed and several wounded.

I expect an attack about daylight to-morrow. I feel confident of success, so far as *we* (the navy) are concerned. My plan of defense prevents me giving the army what aid I should wish before the ram is whipped. You need not be uneasy as to the result. I have written the admiral as I write you.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
C. W. FLUSSER, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

*Commander H. K. Davenport,
Senior Naval Officer,
Inland Waters of North Carolina,
U. S. S. Hetzel, New Berne, N. C.*

Over-private—

I wish you could be here to-morrow to see as nice a little fight "as ever you see."

[*Flusser's last letter.*]

MIAMI, PLYMOUTH, N. C., 18 April, 1864.

My dear Davenport:

The army has been engaged with the enemy, off and on, all day. About sunset the rebs advanced along our whole line but were driven back. They were obstinate and continued to fight till near 9 o'clock. The Southfield and Miami took part and the general says our firing was admirable.

I am fearful for Fort Gray. The enemy has established a battery of long-range guns above it, with which they would sink all our boats if we went near enough to the fort to fire grape and canister into the enemy's infantry. They sunk the army steamer Bombshell to-day, temporarily under command of Ensign Stokes, who fought her well. I gave the army to-day one hundred projectiles for 100-pdr. Parrott. Please send powder, shot and shells for that gun, for IX-inch, and for XX-pdr. Parrott. The ram will be down to-night or to-morrow; she was, just after daylight this morning, foul of a tree six miles above Williamston. I think, if she does not stay under cover of their battery established above Fort Gray, that we shall whip her. I had to destroy the obstruction in the Thoroughfare, as the Whitehead was above and could not run by the battery placed below her on the Roanoke.

I have written the admiral. The 85th redoubt repulsed three obstinate assaults, but the enemy remain near it.

In great haste, yours sincerely,

C. W. FLUSSER.

Commander H. K. Davenport, &c., &c., &c.

Remember me to your officers. Did not know this sheet was blotted till I wrote the other side.

NOV 7 1907

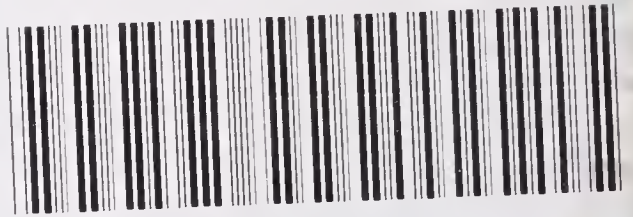
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